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MCCCLURE'S
MAGAZINE

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**THE DAUGHTERS
OF THE POOR**

**A Plain Story of the White Slave
Trade under Tammany Rule**

by George Kibbe Turner

PSYCHOLOGY and the MARKET
by Professor Hugo Munsterberg

**GERMANY'S PREPAREDNESS
FOR WAR**

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* Lieutenant Shackleton will come to this country in March for a lecture tour, under the auspices of the Civic Forum in the East, and Mr. Lee Keedick in the Middle West.

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THE TIGER CHARM

BY

ALICE PERRIN

THE sun, the sky, the burning, dusty atmosphere, the waving sea of tall yellow grass seemed molten into one blinding blaze of pitiless heat to the aching vision of little Mrs. Wingate.

In spite of blue goggles, pith sun-hat, and enormous umbrella, she felt as if she were being slowly roasted alive; for the month was May, and she and her husband were perched on the back of an elephant, traversing a large tract of jungle at the foot of the Himalayas.

Colonel Wingate was one of the keenest sportsmen in India, and every day for the past week he and his wife and their friend, Captain Bastable, had sallied forth from the camp with a line of elephants to beat through the forests of grass that reached to the animals' ears; to squelch over swamps, disturbing herds of antelope and wild pig; to pierce thick tangles of jungle, from which rose pea-fowl, black partridge, and birds of gorgeous plumage; to cross stony beds of dry rivers—ever on the watch for the tigers that had hitherto baffled all their efforts.

As each "likely" spot was drawn a blank, Netta Wingate heaved a sigh of relief; for she hated sport, was afraid of the elephants, and lived in hourly terror of seeing a tiger. She longed for the fortnight in camp to be over, and secretly hoped that the latter week of it might prove as unsuccessful as the first. Her skin was burnt to the hue of a berry; her head ached perpetually from the heat and glare; the motion of the elephant made her feel sick; and if she ventured to speak, her husband only impatiently bade her be quiet.

This afternoon, as they plowed and rocked over the hard, uneven ground, she could scarcely keep awake, dazzled as she was by the vista of scorched yellow country and the gleam of her husband's rifle-barrels in the melting sunshine. She swayed drowsily from side to side in the howdah, her head drooped, her eyelids closed.

She was roused by a torrent of angry exclamations. Her umbrella had hitched itself

obstinately into the collar of Colonel Wingate's coat, and he was making infuriated efforts to free himself. Jim Bastable, approaching on his elephant, caught a mixed vision of the refractory umbrella and two agitated sun-hats, the red face and fierce blue eyes of the Colonel, and the anxious, apologetic, sleepy countenance of Mrs. Wingate as she hurriedly strove to release her irate lord and master. The whole party came to an involuntary halt, the natives listening with interest as the sahib stormed at the mem-sahib and the umbrella in the same breath.

"That howdah is not big enough for two people," shouted Captain Bastable, coming to the rescue. "Let Mrs. Wingate change to mine. It's bigger, and my elephant has easier paces."

Hot, irritated, angry, Colonel Wingate commanded his wife to betake herself to Bastable's elephant, and to keep her infernal umbrella closed for the rest of the day, adding that women had no business out tiger-shooting, and why the devil had she come at all?—oblivious of the fact that Mrs. Wingate had begged to be allowed to stay in the station, and that he himself had insisted on her coming.

She well knew that argument or contradiction would only make matters worse, for he had swallowed three stiff whisky-and-sodas at luncheon in the broiling sun, and, since the severe sunstroke that had so nearly killed him two years ago, the smallest quantity of spirits was enough to change him from an exceedingly bad-tempered man into something little short of a maniac. She had heedlessly married him when she was barely nineteen, turning a deaf ear to warnings of his violence, and now, at twenty-three, her existence was one long fear. He never allowed her out of his sight; he never believed a word she said; he watched her, suspected her, bullied her unmercifully, and was insanely jealous. Unfortunately, she was one of those nervous, timid women who often rather provoke ill-treatment than otherwise.

This afternoon she marveled at being permitted to change to Captain Bastable's howdah, and with a feeling of relief scrambled off the elephant, though trembling, as she always did, lest the great beast should seize her with his trunk or lash her with his tail, which was like a jointed iron rod. Then, once safely perched up behind Captain Bastable, she settled herself with a delightful sense of security. He understood her nervousness; he did not laugh or grumble at her little involuntary cries of fear; he was not impatient when she was convinced that the elephant was running away or sinking in a quicksand, or that the howdah was slipping off. He also understood the Colonel, and had several times helped her through a trying situation; and now the sympathy in his kind eyes made her tender heart throb with gratitude.

"All right?" he asked.

She nodded, smiling, and they started again, plowing and lurching through the coarse grass, great wisps of which the elephant uprooted with his trunk and beat against his chest, to get rid of the soil before putting them in his mouth. Half an hour later, as they drew near the edge of the forest, one of the elephants suddenly stopped short, with a jerky, backward movement, and trumpeted shrilly. There was an expectant halt all along the line, and a cry from a native of "Tiger! Tiger!" Then an enormous striped beast bounded out of the grass and stood for a moment in a small open space, lashing its tail and snarling defiance. Colonel Wingate fired. The tiger, badly wounded, charged, and sprang at the head of Captain Bastable's elephant. There was a confusion of noise—savage roars from the tiger, shrieks from the excited elephants, shouts from the natives, banging of rifles. Mrs. Wingate covered her face with her hands. She heard a thud as of a heavy body falling to the ground, and then she found herself being flung from side to side of the howdah, as the elephant bolted madly toward the forest, one huge ear torn to ribbons by the tiger's claws.

She heard Captain Bastable telling her to hold on tight, and shouting desperate warnings to the mahout to keep the elephant as clear of the forest as possible. Like many nervous people, in the face of real danger she suddenly became absolutely calm, and uttered no sound as the pace increased and they tore along the forest edge, escaping overhanging boughs by a miracle. To her it seemed that the ponderous flight lasted for hours. She was bruised, shaken, giddy, and the crash that came at last was a relief rather than otherwise. A huge branch combed the howdah off the elephant's

back, sweeping the mahout with it, while the still terrified animal sped on, trumpeting and crashing through the forest.

Mrs. Wingate was thrown clear off the howdah. Captain Bastable had saved himself by jumping, and only the old mahout lay doubled up and unconscious amongst the débris of shattered wood, torn leather, and broken ropes. Netta could hardly believe she was not hurt, and she and Captain Bastable stared at each other with dazed faces for some moments before they could collect their senses. Far away in the distance they could hear the elephant still running. Between them they extricated the mahout, and, seating herself on the ground, Netta took the old man's unconscious head on her lap, while Captain Bastable anxiously examined the wizened, shrunken body.

"Is he dead?" she asked.

"I can't be sure. I'm afraid he is. I wonder if I could find some water? I haven't an idea where we are, for I lost all count of time and distance. I hope Wingate is following us. Should you be afraid to stay here while I have a look round and see if we are anywhere near a village?"

"Oh, no; I sha'n't be frightened," she said steadily. Her delicate, clear-cut face looked up at him fearlessly from the tangled background of mighty trees and dense creepers; and her companion could scarcely believe that she was the same trembling, nervous little coward of an hour before.

He left her, and the stillness of the jungle was very oppressive when the sound of his footsteps died away. She was alone with a dead or dying man, on the threshold of the vast, mysterious forest, with its possible horrors of wild elephants, tigers, leopards, snakes. She tried to turn her thoughts from such things, but the scream of a peacock made her start as it rent the silence, and then the undergrowth began to rustle ominously. It was only a porcupine that came out, rattling its quills, and, on seeing her, it ran into further shelter out of sight.

It seemed to be growing darker, and she fancied the evening must be drawing on. She wondered if her husband would overtake them. If not, how were she and Jim Bastable to get back to the camp? Then she heard voices and footsteps, and presently a little party of natives came in sight, led by Jim, and bearing a string bedstead.

"I found a village not far off," he explained, "and thought we'd better take the poor old chap there. Then, if the Colonel doesn't turn up by the time we've seen him comfortably

settled, we must find our way back to the camp as best we can."

The natives chattered and exclaimed as they lifted the unconscious body on to the bedstead, and then the little procession started. Netta was so bruised and stiff she could hardly walk; but, with the help of Bastable's arm, she hobbled along until the village was gained. The headman conducted them to his house, which consisted of a mud hovel, shared by himself and his family with several relations, besides a cow and a goat with two kids. He gave Netta a wicker stool to sit on and some smoky buffalo's milk to drink. The village physician was summoned, and at last succeeded in restoring the mahout to consciousness and pouring a potion down his throat.

"I die," whispered the patient feebly.

Netta went to his side, and he recognized her.

"A—ree! mem-sahib!" he quavered. "So Allah has guarded thee. But the anger of the Colonel sahib will be great against me for permitting the elephant to run away, and it is better that I die. Where is that daughter of a pig? She was a rascal from her youth up; but to-day was the first time she ever really disobeyed my voice."

He tried to raise himself, but fell back groaning, for his injuries were internal and past hope.

"It is growing dark." He put forth his trembling hand blindly. "Where is the little white lady who so feared the sahib, and the elephants, and the jungle? Do not be afraid, mem-sahib. Those who fear should never go into the jungle. So if thou seest a tiger, be bold, be bold; call him 'uncle' and show him the tiger charm. Then will he turn away and harm thee not——" He wandered on incoherently, his fingers fumbling with something at his throat, and presently he drew out a small silver amulet attached to a piece of cord. As he held it toward Netta, it flashed in the light of the miserable native oil-lamp that some one had just brought in and placed on the floor.

"Take it, mem-sahib, and feel no fear while thou hast it, for no tiger would touch thee. It was my father's, and his father's before him, and there is that written on it which has ever protected us from the tiger's tooth. I myself shall need it no longer, for I am going, whereat my nephew will rejoice; for he has long coveted my seat. Thou shalt have the charm, mem-sahib, for thou hast stayed by an old man, and not left him to die alone in a Hindu village and a strange place. Some day in the hour of danger thy little fingers may touch the charm, and then thou wilt recall old Mahomed Bux, mahout, with gratitude."

He groped for Netta's hand, and pushed the amulet into her palm. She took it, and laid her cool fingers on the old man's burning forehead.

"Salaam, Mahomed Bux," she said softly. "Bahut, bahut, salaam." Which is the nearest Hindustani equivalent for "Thank you."

But he did not hear her. He was wandering again, and for half an hour he babbled of elephants, of tigers, of camps and jungles, until his voice became faint and died away in hoarse gasps.

Then he sighed heavily and lay still, and Jim Bastable took Mrs. Wingate out into the air and told her that the old mahout was dead. She gave way and sobbed, for she was aching all over and tired to death, and she dreaded the return to the camp.

"Oh, my dear girl, please don't cry!" said Jim distressfully. "Though really I can't wonder at it, after all you've gone through to-day; and you've been so awfully plucky, too."

Netta gulped down her tears. It was delicious to be praised for courage, when she was accustomed only to abuse for cowardice.

"How are we to get back to the camp?" she asked dolefully. "It's so late."

And, indeed, darkness had come swiftly on, and the light of the village fires was all that enabled them to see each other.

"The moon will be up presently; we must wait for that. They say the village near our camp lies about six miles off, and that there is a cart-track of sorts toward it. I told them they must let us have a bullock-cart, and we shall have to make the best of that."

They sat down side by side on a couple of large stones, and listened in silence to the lowing of the tethered cattle, the ceaseless, irritating cry of the brain-fever bird, and the subdued conversation of a group of children and village idlers, who had assembled at a respectful distance to watch them with inquisitive interest. Once a shrill trumpeting in the distance told of a herd of wild elephants out for a night's raid on the crops, and at intervals packs of jackals swept howling across the fields, while the moon rose gradually over the collection of squalid huts and flooded the vast country with a light that made the forest black and fearful.

Then a clumsy little cart, drawn by two small, frightened white bullocks, rattled into view. Jim and Netta climbed into the vehicle, and were politely escorted off the premises by the headman and the concourse of interested villagers and excited women and children.

They bumped and shook over the rough, uneven track. The bullocks raced or crawled

alternately, while the driver twisted their tails and abused them hoarsely. The moonlight grew brighter and more glorious. The air, now soft and cool, was filled with strong scents and the hum of insects released from the heat of the day.

At last they caught the gleam of white tents against the dark background of a mango grove.

"The camp," said Captain Bastable shortly. Netta made a nervous exclamation.

"Do you think there will be a row?" he asked with some hesitation. They had never discussed Mrs. Wingate's domestic troubles together.

"Perhaps he is still out looking for us," she said evasively.

"If he had followed us at all, he must have found us. I believe he went on shooting, or came back to the camp." There was an angry impatience in his voice. "Don't be nervous," he added hastily. "Try not to mind anything he may say. Don't listen. He can't always help it, you know. I wish you could persuade him to retire; the sun out here makes him half off his head."

"I wish I could," she sighed. "But he will never do anything I ask him, and the big game shooting keeps him in India."

Jim nodded, and there was a comprehending silence between them till they reached the edge of the camp, got out of the cart, and made their way to the principal tent. There they discovered Colonel Wingate, still in his shooting-clothes, sitting by the table, on which stood an almost empty bottle of whisky. He rose as they entered, and delivered himself of a torrent of bad language. He accused the pair of going off together on purpose, declaring he would divorce his wife and kill Bastable. He stormed, raved, and threatened, giving them no opportunity to speak, until at last Jim broke in and insisted on being heard.

"For heaven's sake, be quiet," he said firmly, "or you'll have a fit. You saw the elephant run away, and apparently you made no effort to follow us and come to our help. We were swept off by a tree, and the mahout was mortally hurt. It was a perfect miracle that neither your wife nor I was killed. The mahout died in a village, and we had to get here in a bullock-cart." Then, seeing Wingate preparing for another onslaught, Bastable took him by the shoulders. "My dear chap, you're not yourself. Go to bed, and we'll talk it over to-morrow, if you still wish to."

Colonel Wingate laughed harshly. His mood had changed suddenly.

"Go to bed?" he shouted boisterously. "Why, I was just going out when you arrived.

There was a kill last night only a mile off, and I'm going to get the tiger." He stared wildly at Jim, who saw that he was not responsible for his words and actions. His brain, already touched by sunstroke, had given way at last under the power of whisky. Jim's first impulse was to prevent his carrying out his intention of going after the tiger. Then he reflected that it was not safe for Netta to be alone with the man, and that, if Wingate were allowed his own way, it would at least take him out of the camp.

"Very well," said Jim quietly; "and I will come with you."

"Do," answered the Colonel pleasantly, and then, as Bastable turned for a moment, Mrs. Wingate saw her husband make a diabolical grimace at the other's unconscious back. Her heart beat rapidly with fear. Did he mean to murder Jim? She felt convinced he contemplated mischief; but the question was how to warn Captain Bastable without her husband's knowledge. The opportunity came more easily than she had expected, for presently the Colonel went outside to call for his rifle and give some orders. She flew to Bastable's side.

"Be careful," she panted. "He wants to kill you — I know he does. He's mad! Oh, don't go with him — don't go —"

"It will be all right," he said reassuringly. "I'll look out for myself, but I can't let him go alone in this state. We shall only sit up in a tree for an hour or two, for the tiger must have come and gone long ago. Don't be frightened. Go to bed and rest."

She drew from her pocket the little polished amulet the mahout had given her.

"At any rate, take this," she said hysterically. "It may save you from a tiger, if it doesn't from my husband. I know I am silly, but do take it. There may be luck in it — you can never tell; and old Mahomed Bux said it had saved him and his father and his grandfather — and that you ought to call a tiger 'uncle' —" She broke off, half laughing, half crying, utterly unstrung.

To please her he put the little charm into his pocket, and after a hasty drink went out and joined Wingate, who insisted that they should proceed on foot and by themselves. Bastable knew it would be useless to make any opposition, and they started, their rifles in their hands; but when they had gone some distance, and the tainted air told them they were nearing their destination, Jim discovered he had no cartridges.

"Never mind," whispered the Colonel. "I have plenty, and our rifles have the same bore. We can't go back now; we've no time to lose."

Jim submitted, and he and Wingate tiptoed to the foot of a tree, the low branches and thick leaves of which afforded an excellent hiding-place, down-wind from the half-eaten carcass of the cow. They climbed carefully up, making scarcely any noise, and then Jim held out his hand to the other for some cartridges. The Colonel nodded.

"Presently," he whispered, and Jim waited, thinking it extremely unlikely that cartridges would be wanted at all.

The moonlight came feebly through the foliage of the surrounding trees into the little glade before them, in which lay the remains of the carcass, pulled under a bush to shield it from the carrion birds. A deer pattered by toward the river, casting startled glances on every side; insects beat against the faces of the two men; and a jackal ran out, his brush hanging down, looked round, and retired again with a melancholy howl. Then there arose a commotion in the branches of the neighboring trees, and a troop of monkeys fought and crashed and chattered as they leaped from bough to bough. Jim knew that this often portended the approach of a tiger, and a moment afterward a long, hoarse call from the river told him that the warning was correct. He made a silent sign for the cartridges; but Wingate took no notice: his face was hard and set, and the whites of his eyes gleamed.

A few seconds later a large tiger crept slowly out of the grass, his stomach on the ground, his huge head held low. Jim remembered the native superstition that the head of a man-eating tiger is weighed down by the souls of its victims. With a run and a spring, the creature attacked its meal, and began growling and munching contentedly, purring like a cat, and stopping every now and then to tear up the earth with its claws.

A report rang out. Wingate had fired at and hit the tiger. The great beast gave a terrific roar and sprang at the tree. Jim lifted his rifle, only to remember that it was unloaded.

"Shoot again!" he cried excitedly, as the

tiger fell back and prepared for another spring. To his horror, Wingate deliberately fired the second barrel into the air, and, throwing away the rifle, grasped him by the arms. The man's teeth were bared, his face was distorted and hideous, his purpose unmistakable—he was trying to throw Bastable to the tiger. Wingate was strong with the diabolical strength of madness, and they swayed till the branches of the tree cracked ominously. Again the tiger roared and sprang, and again fell back, only to gather itself together for another effort. The two men rocked and panted, the branches cracked louder, with a dry, splitting sound, then broke off altogether, and, locked in each other's arms, they fell heavily to the ground.

Jim Bastable went undermost, and was half stunned by the shock. He heard a snarl in his ear, followed by a dreadful cry. He felt the weight of Wingate's body lifted from him with a jerk, and he scrambled blindly to his feet. As in a nightmare, he saw the tiger bounding away, carrying something that hung limply from the great jaws, just as a cat carries a dead mouse.

He seized the Colonel's rifle that lay near him; but he knew it was empty, and that the cartridges were in the Colonel's pocket. He ran after the tiger, shouting, yelling, brandishing the rifle, in the hope of frightening the brute into dropping its prey; but, after one swift glance back, it bounded into the thick jungle with the speed of a deer, and Bastable was left standing alone.

Faint and sick, he began running madly toward the camp for help, though he knew well that nothing in this world could ever help Wingate again. His forehead was bleeding profusely, either hurt in the fall or touched by the tiger's claw, and the blood trickling into his eyes nearly blinded him. He pulled his handkerchief from his pocket as he ran, and something came with it that glittered in the moonlight and fell to the ground with a metallic ring.

It was the little silver amulet: the tiger charm.

